



Town Administrator's Report Board of Selectmen's Meeting of August 25, 2008

Report covers from August 9, 2008 to August 22, 2008

Items requiring Board vote or discussion are noted with an asterisk (*)

A. Town Department Reports/Requests

(1) Parking of Senior Van

At the last meeting, the Board discussed the best place for the overnight parking of the Senior Van. The Board determined that the van should be parked behind the Senior Center so it can easily be moved to the handicapped accessible loading and unloading zone in front of the building when in use. The Chairman delivered a memo to the Council on Aging outlining that decision.

Recommendation: No further action is necessary.

(2) Shellfish Department Emergency Training

At the last meeting, the Board agreed that the two Deputy Shellfish Constables should be appointed as Assistant Harbormasters after they receive training in first aid and CPR. The Harbormaster has since arranged for that training (to be held over a series of three Saturdays in September) and the Ipswich Shellfish Constable and the drivers of the Senior Van have also been invited to participate.

Recommendation: I will update the Board as necessary.

(3) Shellfish Constable Site Visit

(*)

At the last meeting, the Board indicated that the members would like to spend some time in the field with the Shellfish Constable to learn more about the job and the challenges that the Constable faces. The Constable proposed a number of dates and the Board was able to visit him in the field on August 22, 2008.

Recommendation: **Board discussion as necessary.**

(4) Coordination of Town Business

At the last meeting, the Board agreed that it would be useful to invite the chairs of all Town boards, committees, and commissions to the Board meeting of September 22, 2008 along with key Town staff. The purpose of the session will be to explore ways to better conduct Town business and increase efficiency. The Selectmen's Assistant distributed a memo inviting those personnel and provided the Chairman with phone numbers so he could follow up with a personal invitation.

Recommendation: No further action is necessary at this time.

(5) Regular Visits from Manchester Essex School Committee

At the last meeting, the Board indicated that brief visits from School Committee and/or subcommittee members every other month or so may help to keep informed relative to the school building construction project and other school initiatives. As such, I passed that invitation along to the School Committee Chair and she will arrange for the first visit which will occur at the Board's meeting of September 8, 2008.

Recommendation: No further action is necessary.

(6) Senior Van Safety

It would benefit the drivers and users of the Town's Senior Van to have a dedicated cell phone on board that would allow a driver to contact 911 in the event of an emergency. Drivers generally carry their own cell phones anyway and this additional phone would be an added safeguard. Since all cell phones are required to be able to connect to 911 whether under contract or not, I am attempting to acquire a used cell phone from a non-profit group dedicated to this purpose. If that effort is not successful, we could use an old phone with a charger that could be donated by a member of the public. We will not need to pay a maintenance fee to have the phone available. The phone will be placed in the van and will be recharged on a regular basis between van trips.

Also, I have received from our insurer a safety video that our van drivers can view. I will coordinate the safety information with an upcoming effort to offer drivers a basic first aid and CPR course.

Recommendation: I will update the Board as necessary.

(7) Long Term Planning Committee Survey

The deadline for the Long Term Planning Committee's recent survey was August 15, 2008. At the request of Committee members, I downloaded the results into an Excel spreadsheet and grouped and formatted the data. The Committee members will use the survey results to craft a more detailed survey that they will release this coming fall.

Recommendation: I will update the Board as necessary.

B. Computer Systems

(1) Deployment of Network Routers

Our computer consultant visited Essex on August 20, 2008 to assist me with the deployment of routing devices intended to take the function of routing inter-building traffic away from individual servers. Routing traffic using these new devices will make that function more reliable. I had pre-configured the routers for use in both the Water Filtration Plant and the Fire/Police Headquarters networks

and we were able to insert one into the Fire/Police network successfully. I was advised to monitor the system for a few days in order to ensure that there are no problems and will repeat the process at the Water Filtration Plant and, eventually, with the Town Hall network. Presently, I am working with the consultant to work out an issue involving remote sessions.

Recommendation: I will update the Board as necessary. Total time – 2 hours.

(2) MVLC Mail Server Migration

The MVLC informed the Librarian that their mail server was being migrated to a new server with new settings. I assisted the Librarian with the reconfiguration of those settings in accordance with the MVLC written guidance but outgoing mail presented a problem. The Librarian contacted MVLC for further support.

Recommendation: No further action is necessary.

(3) BudgetSense Software Update

Our accounting software vendor released an updated version of the BudgetSense accounting program during the week of August 11, 2008. I downloaded and installed the update and performed the necessary database maintenance.

Recommendation: No further action is necessary.

(4) Installation of CD ROM/DVD Drive

The older model laptop used by the Public Health Nurse had a failure associated with its original CD ROM drive. The Board of Health Administrator acquired a new, external drive from the grantmaker that originally provided the Board of Health with that computer and asked for assistance with installation. I installed the new drive and was able to use it to load a printer driver that will allow the Nurse to print to the Administrator's printer as opposed to the general network printer.

Recommendation: No further action is necessary. Total time – ½ hour.

(5) Additional Survey Tool Users

The Youth Commission plans to utilize the Town's on-line survey tool in the future. As such, I have created accounts for the Youth Director and the Chair of the Commission.

Recommendation: No further action is necessary.

C. Personnel

(1) Continued Teamster Mediated Collective Bargaining (*)

The Management Team met with the Teamsters through a State mediator on August 22, 2008.

Recommendation: **Board discussion in executive session.**

(2) New Dog Officer

As the Board is aware, Ms. Amy Reilly will become the Town's new Dog Officer on September 1, 2008. As such, I provided Chief Silva and Animal Health Inspector Pam Stone with Ms. Reilly's contact information so that calls can be routed to her beginning in September.

Recommendation: No further action is necessary.

(3) Personnel Board Meeting (*)

The next Personnel Board meeting will be held in mid-September. I will place a draft agenda in the Board's reading folder. Two important considerations include the development of both a position description and a wage for the proposed Town Planner since those items need to be approved by the Personnel Board. In fact, the wage needs to be recommended by the Personnel Board to the upcoming Special Town Meeting if the FY09 Wage & Salary Scale is to be modified for the Planner at that meeting.

Recommendation: **Board discussion relative to the Town Planner preparations.**

(4) Safety Committee Meeting

The next Safety Committee meeting will be held on September 16, 2008. I have placed a draft agenda in the Board's reading folder.

Recommendation: I will update the Board as necessary.

D. Procurement

(1) Finalization of Conomo Point RFP

On August 12, 2008, I attended a meeting of the subcommittee that is developing the Request for Proposals for a consultant that would guide the subdivision of a portion of Conomo Point. The members of the subcommittee were able to provide me with the specific criteria necessary for evaluation of proposals after they arrive. They also expressed a preference for the use of a public proposal process that deviates somewhat from Chapter 30b if Town Counsel opined that the alternative format could be used legally in this case. I utilized that guidance to finalize the document and I had it reviewed by Town Counsel. Town Counsel did

opine that the alternative format was permissible and the full Committee voted on August 14, 2008 to utilize that format subject to any final comments by Town Counsel.

The RFP was officially released via the local paper, the *Goods and Services Bulletin*, and local posting on August 25, 2008. Copies are available in my office but the easiest way to acquire the document is via the Town's website at www.essexma.org where I have provided a registration and download feature. The MAPC maps that were created in the past are referenced in the RFP and are available for download as well. I worked with MAPC to correct minor labeling errors that were present on the original maps. A site walk will be held on September 10, 2008 and proposals will be due by October 1, 2008.

Recommendation: I will update the Board as necessary.

(2) Request for Heating Oil Quotations

I have developed and released a request for quotations for the provision of heating oil to Town Buildings for the upcoming year. Quotations are due on September 11, 2008 and the Board will consider approving a one-year contract at its meeting of September 22, 2008. As usual, the quotations will be indexed to the low daily Boston wholesale price for #2 fuel oil as published in the *Journal of Commerce*.

Recommendation: I will update the Board as necessary.

E. Insurance

No items.

F. Facilities

(1) Investigation of Fire Station Drainage Issues

A contractor visited the Fire Station Property on August 14, 2008 accompanied by both a water jet unit and a pipe video camera unit. With the assistance of Fire Department personnel, the contractor was able to determine that the water pooling in the basement locker room is likely a groundwater problem as opposed to strictly a blocked or collapsed drain problem. The Fire Department and Safety Committee will review the contractor's findings and consider the issue further.

Recommendation: I will update the Board as necessary.

(2) Investigation of Town Hall Chimney Interior (*)

As noted previously, I had been looking into the Fire Department's use of a camera to further investigate the interior integrity of one of the Town Hall chimneys. However, I have learned that the Fire Department's camera is infrared only and will not be suitable for the purpose we have in mind. As the Board may

recall, some bricks from the interior of the chimney had fallen to the base of the chimney in late July.

I contacted the contractor that assisted us with a variety of temporary roof repairs in the past and that contractor indicated that chimney experts usually drop their own camera down a chimney on a cable to provide recommendations. In this case, that process may require the chimney contractor to rent a lift that can be fairly expensive. The roof contractor will put me in touch with a chimney expert that he recommends and I will provide more detail on the issue once I have spoken to that expert.

***Recommendation:* Board discussion if further information is available by meeting time.**

(3) Review of Verizon and Comcast Infrastructure (*)

At the last meeting, the Board discussed the success of a recent meeting with our Legislators and National Grid relative to National Grid's agreement to clean up their equipment and improve their service along the causeway. The Board indicated that it will be important to coordinate that work with the upcoming Route 133 Reconstruction Project and I have put the manager of that Project in touch with the National Grid representatives who had expressed a commitment to the cleanup work.

The Board also discussed how some residents have complained about the age and performance of Verizon equipment in that area. Further, a new downtown merchants' group has expressed interest in voicing their opinion about Comcast and Verizon facility/wire cleanup. At the Chairman's suggestion, I am working with one of Representative Verga's aides to acquire appropriate contact names for Comcast and Verizon so that they can potentially attend a Selectmen's meeting along with the merchants' group and National Grid representatives in the future. After a comprehensive plan is established, that plan could be coordinated with the upcoming Route 133 Reconstruction Project.

***Recommendation:* Board discussion relative to the setup and timing of the referenced meeting appointment.**

(4) Painting of Grove Concession Stand

At the last meeting, the Board considered a request from a church group to provide some type of maintenance activity at the Grove in exchange for the use of the Grove for a church picnic. The Board agreed that it would be appropriate to ask the church to paint the Concession Stand. I posed that project to the church and the church has agreed to perform that work. Supplies will be provided by the Town and the project will occur in the coming weeks. The colors will be coordinated with the painting of the Folsom Pavilion that is being undertaken by a boy scout as part of his Eagle Scout project.

Recommendation: I will update the Board as necessary.

(5) Planting of Mums at Town Hall

At the last meeting, the Board agreed that the Town should participate in an upcoming effort in Town to plant mums for the fall season. The hope is that the initiative (known as “Mums the Word”) will attract visitors to Town. I contacted a landscaping contractor about the planting of mums in the new beds in front of the Town Hall and the planting will occur in September.

Recommendation: No further action is necessary.

(6) Light Tubes in Town Hall

The Collector’s Clerk informed me about the failure of the fluorescent light tube in the main lighting fixture for the Town Hall lobby. Two fixtures in the Town Accountant’s Office were also out. I replaced the tubes and all fixtures are working well.

Recommendation: No further action is necessary.

(7) Senior Center Audio/Visual Orientation

Council on Aging Member Robert Cameron was interested in learning more about the audio/visual capabilities at the Senior Center. As such, I met him at the building and demonstrated the use of various devices such as the flat screen television, the DVD/VCR unit, the house computer, and the computer video link to the television.

Recommendation: No further action is necessary.

(8) Senior Center Intercom System

The volunteer senior citizens who answer the general line downstairs at the Senior Center frequently get calls for individuals working on the second floor in the office. As such, I have ordered a wireless intercom system that will allow the volunteers to summon parties upstairs without the need to move from the reception table.

Recommendation: No further action is necessary.

(9) Broken Window, Town Hall

One pane of a narrow basement window (roughly 9” x 9”) in Town Hall was found broken recently. Other identical windows had been boarded up long ago and, due to the age and condition of this window, this window will also be boarded up. If the building is renovated in the future, this narrow window and many others in the building will be replaced.

Recommendation: No further action is necessary.

G. Fiscal/Budget

(1) Future Joint Meeting with Youth Commission and Finance Committee(*)

At the last meeting, the Board agreed that it will be important to review the finances of the Youth Commission after their fiscal year 2008 free cash has been certified. This will allow for discussion relative to projected revenue, spending, and reserves. In preparation for that meeting, the Board asked me to acquire from the Town Accountant a report on fiscal year 2009 revenue and expenses to date and an estimate relative to free cash certification. I have acquired that information and the Board may wish to review at the present meeting and set the next steps.

Recommendation: **Board review of the information acquired from the Town Accountant for the fiscal year thus far.**

(2) Annual Reassessment of Risk Assessment/Monitoring Plan

As the Board may recall, last year, at the recommendation of our auditor, the Town adopted a Risk Assessment and Monitoring Plan to minimize the chance of fraud or improper use of funds. The plan has a built-in annual reassessment feature that allows Town staff and officials to update it in accordance with new developments or with new ideas. I am presently working with the necessary parties to schedule the reassessment meeting for the month of September.

Recommendation: I will update the Board as necessary.

H. Complaints

No items.

I. Meetings Attended

(1) Joint School/Town Workgroup Meeting

I attended the subject meeting on August 13, 2008 along with Chairman Randall and staff and officials from Essex, Manchester, and the Regional School District. The group had kicked off a discussion in July of 2008 that ended in agreement that the public works departments of both communities should be represented at the next meeting.

DPW-related discussion highlighted the existing working relationships among the entities and both superintendents of public works will be getting together to discuss additional ideas. The group also covered the potential inclusion of both towns in future, blanket procurements of goods and services by the District; the recent announcement of \$10M in school construction project reimbursement (with more likely coming); and an update relative to the school construction project

itself. The next meeting will be on September 17, 2008 and will feature a discussion relative to the potential sharing of Youth services among the three entities.

Recommendation: I will update the Board as necessary.

J. Final Judgment

No items.

K. Town Meeting, By-Laws, and Regulations

(1) Vehicular Access to Front Beach, Conomo Point

The Board had voted to install posts and a chain to the access way to Front Beach on Conomo Point since vehicles were launching boats and parking there despite a longstanding Board order to the contrary (between June 1 and October 1). A number of clambers approached the Board at the last meeting to ask if the Board's order could be relaxed somewhat since access to that area would be helpful early in the morning, during emergencies, and in the evening. The Board agreed that vehicular launching and retrieving of boats before 8 a.m. and after 6 p.m. would be allowed so long as the vehicles/trailers park elsewhere (not on the beach).

I informed the Shellfish Constable, the Chief of Police, and the Superintendent of Public Works about the change in policy and they will monitor the situation accordingly. As always, launching and parking in that area is allowed anytime outside of the June-October 1 time period.

Recommendation: No further action is necessary at this time.

(2) Development of Proposed Dog Control By-law Section

At the last meeting, after discussion of the subject topic by the Board, Selectman Lynch indicated that he would work to put together a draft of a new dog by-law section for the Board's review. As noted in the past, I was planning to review potential Town Meeting topics with the Board in September and will add this potential initiative to the list.

Recommendation: I will update the Board as necessary.

L. Legal Issues

No items.

M. Grants

(1) 2008 Volunteer Fire Assistance (VFA) Grant

The Fire Chief applied for and has received a small amount of funding under the subject grant program. The grant of almost \$800 will defray about half the cost of some new, miscellaneous firefighting equipment.

Recommendation: No further action is necessary.

(2) Interest in the Seaport Bond Bill

(*)

At the last meeting, the Board agreed that I should work with Representative Verga's Office to develop a letter to the Seaport Advisory Council that inquires as to the potential availability of funds for the construction of public waterfront access facilities in the Essex causeway area. According to the Massachusetts State Website, "The Seaport Advisory Council is Governor Patrick's administrative panel for coordinating policy and development of the Commonwealth's sea ports. The council consists of 15 voting members including four cabinet secretaries, the director of Massport, five port city mayors and regional representatives. The Council meets quarterly in different port cities and towns to vote on maritime policy and the allocation of Seaport Bond Bill dollars for port development projects."

I discussed the topic further with the Representative's Office and one of his assistants provided me with appropriate contact information and recommended that the Town file a Seaport Project Review Form with the Council. The Seaport Improvement Grants Program has an open-ended application process and the Board could send a letter to the Council with the Review Form attached once the specific scope of the project has been determined.

Recommendation: **Board discussion relative to potential project scope and eventual outreach to the Advisory Council.**

(3) Solar Challenge

(*)

At the last meeting, the Board discussed a program that just became operative in the Town of Sharon that encourages residents to donate to a wind energy program that ultimately also contributes funds to a town's Clean Energy Choice Fund. The Board asked that I determine how Essex would arrange to enroll in the Solar Challenge Program to augment the funds that already flow into the Clean Energy Choice account via Essex ratepayers selecting green energy from their electric provider.

I contacted the Town of Sharon and was referred to the Massachusetts Technology Collaborative (MTC). I placed a call to the MTC and I am presently awaiting a reply from the program coordinator. I will ask what requirements and

expectations exist when a municipality enrolls. Also, as requested, I called the program to the attention of the local press and placed a link to Sharon's program on the Town website.

Recommendation: Board discussion if additional information is available by meeting time.

(4) Final Closeout of Senior Center Grant (*)

Our administrative consultant for the Senior Center grant has informed us that the Department of Housing and Community Development has made some additional grant closeout modules of its computerized grant management system available. Now that the new modules are functional, the Chairman is required to submit a letter certifying that the grant was audited and that there were no findings and a second letter certifying that the Chairman has read and approved the final Quarterly Report. I have prepared the necessary letters for the Chairman's signature.

Recommendation: Chairman's signature of the required letters.

(5) Congressman Tierney's Grant Resources Seminar

As noted in the past, Congressman Tierney had compiled a package of grant resources for a seminar that he offered in early August. I had asked his office at the time if the package could be forwarded to the Town for use by the Long Term Planning Committee and I have since learned that it will soon be on its way. I will forward the package to the Committee once we receive it.

Recommendation: No further action is necessary.

(6) Oil Spill Response Trailer

The State has delivered to the Fire Department the Oil Spill Response Trailer that the Town recently applied for. The Fire Department is in the process of inventorying the contents so we may certify that the trailer contains all of the supplies that the State has represented on its checklist. I will return that certification when the Fire Department completes the inventory. The State will provide training on the use of the trailer to the Fire Department in the near future.

Recommendation: No further action is necessary.

N. Emergency Planning

(1) Natural Hazards Mitigation Plan Kickoff Meeting

Mr. Brad Stoler of the Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC) met with the Chief of Police, the Superintendent of Public Works, the Board of Health Administrator, and myself on August 14, 2008 to initiate work relative to the subject plan. The goal of the plan is to identify natural hazards that may become

issues during certain weather conditions (rain events, storm surges, snowstorms, etc.). The plan is being funded mostly by Federal money and partially by a Town appropriation and, once completed, will allow the Town to compete for additional funding that could actually mitigate hazards so that they do not contribute to problems during emergency times. Importantly, the Federal Government will soon require a plan of this nature to be in place in any community that is to receive disaster funding after a major event.

At this first meeting, we identified problem flooding areas such as the causeway, the Apple Street bridge, the Walnut Park drainage, roads near Chebacco Lake, Gregory Island, and a drain near the Essex/Hamilton line. We also discussed areas prone to drifting of snow, road washouts, and lightning strikes. MAPC will plot these areas on a map of the Town and will be back to us with the next step in the process. The plan will likely take 6 months to a year to complete.

Recommendation: I will update the Board as necessary.

O. Other Items

No items.

This report is available at www.essexma.org on the morning after any regularly scheduled Essex Board of Selectmen's Meeting.